

Talking Points

Public Health and Health Care Task Force

Presentation to the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission

Goals: Provide for the immediate and long-term health needs of individuals and communities resulting from the 2008 disasters.

- The Task Force focused on people – the public health and health care needs of the individuals impacted by the disaster, along with others (first responders,
- Discussed two aspects of Goal 2,
 - Using data indicators to create comprehensive reports that highlight the progress, status, and need in integral recovery subject areas (Objective 2.1)
 - Promoting the rapid restoration of healthcare and human service infrastructure in the impacted areas (Objective 2.9)
- Discussed an objective of Goal 5:
 - Routinely report on progress through public meetings, disclosures, and publications (Objective 5.2)

Mental health services should be available statewide in local communities for individuals impacted by the disasters

- Issue priorities
 - Adequacy of existing service infrastructure, communication and coordination
 - Need to expand current service capacity for mental health services to meet long-term needs and larger target populations. No one who witnesses a disaster goes untouched by it. Services will need to be available for the general public, responders, and volunteers for an extended period of time
- Immediate Strategies:
 - Provide resources to enhance ability of the emergency mental health program to meet needs, including outreach into the community

- Communicate with individuals in the community to inform them related to signs of mental health issues and where to get assistance
- Conduct a broad statewide awareness campaign to provide information to the public designed to help remove the stigma associated with seeking assistance
- Explore options to provide additional capacity for counties to generate revenue to meet demands of regular and increased requests for mental health services

State and local organizations should monitor demands on critical public health and health programs and provide resources to ensure adequate capacity.

- Issue priorities:
 - Ongoing monitoring and surveillance.
 - Long-term and significant demands placed on health and human services organizations and programs that need to meet current and long-term recovery responsibilities while still meeting regular demands for public health and health care services
- Immediate Strategies:
 - Provide resources for surveillance of public health disease and injury surveillance
 - Restore the immunization program to offset the impact of tetanus shots
 - Monitor gaps in support for nonprofit organizations impacted by the disasters and provide state funding support through loans or grants
 - Monitor increases in substance abuse, adult and child abuse and ensure that there are appropriate services to respond

The state should identify policy barriers that prevent the use of existing resources for disaster recovery and implement greater program flexibility.

- Issue priorities:
 - Communication and coordination in order to meet individual needs and navigating the system.

- Resources associated with existing programs or services may be available for disaster recovery if policy, funding, or other programmatic barriers are removed.
- Immediate Strategies:
 - Remove barriers associated with the Senior Living Program to access resources to assist older Iowans services and supports for recovery.
 - Identify other programs within state or locally affiliated agencies with resources that might be leveraged for recovery.

The state, in partnership with local agencies, should strengthen the public health and health infrastructure for current and future disaster response.

- Issue priority:
 - Ensuring adequate levels of services and infrastructure.
 - There is both a necessity and opportunity to strengthen Iowa's public health and health infrastructure to meet the needs resulting from this disaster and further improve response in future disasters.
- Long-Term Strategies:
 - Implement state and local public health standards that have been outlined as part of Iowa's redesigning public health initiative
 - Build local and state response capacity by developing and utilizing coordinated plans for statewide behavioral health response and shelter response teams

The state should provide for the broad health needs of individuals in times of disaster.

- Issue priorities:
 - Meeting individual needs and navigating the system and service infrastructure and capacity. Systems must prepare and provide for the health care needs of all individuals impacted by disaster with consideration for planning, response, and recovery.

- Immediate Strategies:
 - Rebuild physical infrastructure to support greater quality of life, access, and mobility for the elderly and persons with disabilities.
 - Provide case management services to help individuals and families navigate the system and access resources to assist them in recovery.
- Long-Term Strategies
 - Develop plans for health workforce needs and mobility in times of disaster
 - Develop plans at the local level for emergency special needs sheltering for individuals with health care or other unique needs.